



**Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind
Media and Communications Division**

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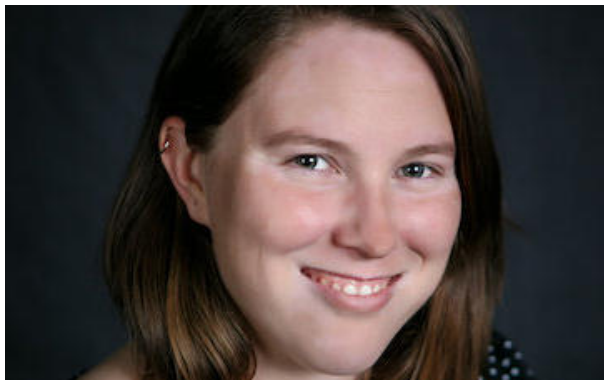
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Phoenix Day Schools for the Deaf Teacher Amber Akapnitis Honored as the 2017 PBS Digital Innovator for Arizona



PDSD Third Grade Teacher Amber Akapnitis

Phoenix, AZ, June 9, 2017 –Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (ASDB) Superintendent Annette Reichman proudly announced that Phoenix Day School for the Deaf (PDSD) third grade teacher [Amber Akapnitis](#) was honored as the 2017 [PBS Digital Innovator](#) for Arizona. Each year, Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) selects one educator from each state and the District of Columbia (D.C.) who has demonstrated exceptional innovation in their approach to teaching students. PBS Digital Innovators are selected in a competitive process in which each participant's application is evaluated by a panel of judges. Only the strongest applicant from each state and Washington D.C., from among hundreds of applicants, is chosen as a PBS Digital Innovator.

"I am thrilled that Amber Akapnitis has been honored as a 2017 PBS Digital Innovator," said ASDB Superintendent Reichman. "Amber is an exceptional educator whose leadership and passion for teaching has empowered her students to succeed. Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind and PDSD are fortunate to benefit from such an excellent teacher whose innovative use of technology and instructional techniques have remarkably improved her students' learning outcomes."

Mrs. Akapnitis will receive a three-day, all-expense paid trip to San Antonio, Texas to participate in the 2017 PBS Digital Innovators Summit on June 24 and June 25, 2017. She will also receive a PBS Teacherline online professional development course and choice of a digital gift. In addition, Phoenix Day School for the Deaf will receive one year of online access to PBS LearningMedia's Custom service.

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“It is an absolute honor to be recognized for the work I've done with technology and innovation in my deaf education classroom,” said third grade PSD teacher Amber Akapnitis. “Technology has changed the way my students learn. I've seen them grow into such well-rounded learners, global thinkers and creative problem solvers. I look forward to continued learning and collaboration with my new group of colleagues through the PBS Digital Innovators program.”

The [Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind \(ASDB\)](#) was founded in 1912 – the year of Arizona’s statehood. ASDB serves over 2,000 children who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, hard-of-hearing, multisensory disabled or deafblind from birth to age 21. ASDB operates two schools for the deaf, one school for the blind, a statewide birth-to-three early childhood and family education program and five regional cooperatives. ASDB is dedicated to empowering young children and students with the educational opportunities necessary to succeed in college, career and life. For more information contact Ryan Ducharme at ryan.ducharme@asdb.az.gov or 602-771-1092.

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